Trade between India and Japan

1109. SHRI SANTOSH KUMAR SAHU: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that India and Japan are keen to increase trade between the countries;

(b) whether the FICCI President has recently revealed that Indian and Japanese businessmen were exploring joint export houses in India; if so, what are the details thereof;

(c) what is the value of exports to Japan during the last two years; and

(d) whether exports have been on the decline; if so, what are the reasons therefor and what are the new items identified for export to Japan?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI P. R. DAS MUNSHI): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) It was stated by the Chairman of India-Japan Business Cooperation Committee that discussions on possibilities of setting up India-Japanese joint ventures in marketing were held at the Standing Committee meeting of the IJBCC held in Srinagar on 15th June, 1987. The venture is conceived as an Indian company with majority Indian participation. The activities of the joint venture will consist mainly of export of Indian goods by taking advantage of the marketing and trading infrastructure of Japanese companies.

(c) Exports from India to Japan in 1985-86 were Rs. 1190.97 crores and in 1986-87, Rs. 1340.90 crores (provisional).

(d) No, Sir.

Meeting of the Foreign Secretaries of India and Pakistan

1110. SHRI SANTOSH KUMAR SAHU: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) when was the meeting of the Foreign Secretaries of India and Pakistan held last;

(b) what were the issues discussed in the meeting; and

(c) what progress has been made in the matter of withdrawal of troops from respective positions along the Indo-Pak borders?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI K. NATWAR SINGH): (a) and (b) Bilateral and other matters of mutual interest were discussed at the last meeting of the Foreign Secretaries of India and Pakistan, which was held from 27th to 29th December, 1986.

(c) Withdrawal of troops along the international border has been completed in accordance with the schedule agreed to by India and Pakistan in the two rounds of talks held so far on this issue from 31st January to 4th February and 27th February to 2nd March this year.

Escalation in rate of deforestation

1111. SHRI J. P. GOYAL:
SHRI VIRENDRA VERMA:

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that despite various measures taken by Government, there is continuous escalation in the rate of deforestation in the country and that no appreciable achievement has been made in checking the increasing vandalism against the forests;

(b) if so, what is the annual percentage of degradation of various types of land, agricultural, forest and land without trees in the country stating the percentage by which the degradation of forest land has risen during the last three years, yearwise and till date; and

(c) what are the major impediments in containing the deforestation and what measures are contemplated by Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI Z. R. ANSARI): (a) and (b) According to the studies of satellite imagery by the National Remote Sensing Agency, the average annual rate of depletion of forest cover during the period 1972—75 to 1980—82 was approximately 1.3 million hectares. The rate of deforestation on account of diversion of forest land for non-forest purposes has come down since the enactment of the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980. No studies have been carried out during the last three years to assess the increase in degradation of forest lands.

(c) Increasing biotic pressure on forest resources and diversion of forest land to non-forest uses are major impediments in containing deforestation. The following measures have been taken by the Government to check deforestation:—

1. Guidelines have been issued to the State Governments

(i) to avoid clearfelling of natural forests and where such fellings are inevitable for restoration of crop or other silvicultural considerations, it should be restricted to areas not exceeding 10 hectares in the hills and 25 hectares in the plains.

(ii) to consider banning of felling in the hills above 1000 metres, at least for some years.

(iii) to identify critical areas in the hills and mountains which require protection from felling of forests and need immediate vigorous afforestations.

(iv) to set apart 4 per cent of the geographical area as protection areas like wildlife sanctuaries, national parks, biosphere reserves etc.

2. Development of infrastructure and enforcement of legal provisions for the protection of forest.

3. Enactment of Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 to check diversion of forest land to non-forest purposes.

4. Development of alternative sources of energy to replace fuelwood in domestic and commercial sectors.

5. Substitution of wood by alternative materials in packaging, railway sleepers and building construction.

6. Liberalised import policy for forest products.

Ex-gratia payment to victims of Novembers, 84 riots

1112. SHRI VIRENDRA VERMA: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to refer to the answer to Unstarred Question 45 given in the Rajya Sabha on the 24th February, 1987 and state:

(a) whether the modalities to pay ex-gratia amount to the November, 1984 riot victims have been worked out;

(b) if so, what are the details thereof stating the period likely to be taken in making the actual payments to the riot victims; and

(c) if the answer to part (a) above be in the negative, what are the reasons for the delay in working out the modalities for payment of ex-gratia amount to the riot victims?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI CHINTAMANI PANIGRAHI): (a) to (c) The modalities regarding payment of ex-gratia amount for the loss|damage of the uninsured property to the November, 1984 riot victims have not yet been finalised. It took some time to get the views of the concerned State Government| Delhi Administration. These are, however, likely to be finalised very soon.

Indulgence of Pakistani Nationals in communal violence

1113. SHRI VIRENDRA VERMA:
SHRI SHARAD YADAV:
SHRI RAM NARESH KUSHAWAHA:

Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that during the recent communal riots in Meerut,